

REMARKS

This amendment is offered in response to the Office Action of March 31, 2003 and further to the accompanying RCE.

The Office Action rejected Claims 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the Kitajima reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,015,081) in view of the Mochizuki reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,825,532) and the Muchel reference (U.S. Patent No. 4,525,042).

Newly-amended claim 13 recites that the common close-up optical system includes one and only one optical axis. Therefore, only the lenses which have common optical axes (e.g., are co-axial) comprise the common close-up optical system.

In contrast, in the Muchel reference, there is no other lens wherein the optical axis is co-axial or in common with that of the main objective lens I. Therefore, there are no other lenses that can be construed as the “common close-up optical system having one and only one optical axis” of newly amended Claim 13. However, the condition “ $f_A > 500$ ” is not satisfied by the main objective lens I of the Muchel reference. It is respectfully submitted that none of the other references teach or suggest such a modification to the Muchel reference.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 13 and 14 are patentable over the cited references.

For all of the reasons above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending

claims are in immediate condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of the claims, to allow the claims, and to pass this application to early issue.

Respectfully submitted,


Gerald Levy
Registration No. 24,419

Ronald E. Brown
Registration No. 32,200

Pitney, Hardin, Kipp & Szuch LLP
685 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10017
(212) 297-5800